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OCD Commit

7 February 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Dulles Committee report upon the Office of
Collection and Dissemination

1. The Dulles Committee proposes, in essence, that the reference functions of OCD be divorced from the liaison functions, that the reference functions be transferred to ORE, and that the liaison functions be administered by ICAPS. The stated reason for this proposal is that the reference and liaison functions have little interrelation, that the former are closely related to the research function of ORE, and that the latter are closely related to the coordinating function of ICAPS. The best reply to this seemingly logical proposal is that the Agency has already tried it out in practice, and found it unsatisfactory.

2. The Committee assistant who inspected the present OCD did not spend, in total, more than a few hours in the Office, so it is not surprising that he emerged with the impression that its functions were many, various, and unrelated. It had taken the Agency many months of hard work, trial, and error, to learn that the seemingly different functions of reference and liaison are, in fact, so closely related that they are better performed by a single administrative unit than by separate ones. It is too early to say that the present is the best of all possible organizational patterns for these functions, but it is not too early to say that it represents an improvement over the older and more obvious pattern which is now proposed anew.

3. It would be exact to state that the techniques of OCD are many and various, involving the use of much unique machine equipment, but it is only on paper that the functions appear unrelated. In truth they all serve a single and common end: to get and store intelligence information and make it available to those who need it.

4. In 1947 the Agency was organized with the Reference Center, embracing library and registers, in ORE; and with the liaison functions assigned to the separate Office of OCD. This is the same, in principle, as what the Committee now proposes. The only difference is that the Reference Center is now to be installed in one of the two Divisions into which ORE is to be split, and that the liaison functions are to be administered by a renamed ICAPS staff instead of by an Assistant Director.

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CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

5. The separation of liaison and reference functions did not work out well in practice. The administrative void between the two worked to the detriment of both. If an analyst in ORE called for a document known to be in the State Department's library, it was clearly the job of the inter-library loan people in CIA's library to get it for him; but if it turned out that the document was subject to stringent security restrictions then it became the job of a Liaison Officer to make arrangements, with appropriate officials of the State Department, for the document to be released. The two jobs were one and the same, but they required different approaches and different techniques. As the library and liaison people were under different administrations they failed to develop intimate knowledge of each other's daily problems, and of the techniques and channels being developed to deal with them. Communications between them were by typed memoranda carried by couriers and messengers, with multiple carbon copies. Delays were many, and tempers were exacerbated. Reference Center and OCD were accursed by all who had to deal with them. Analysts who wanted fast action were prone to embark on independent liaison ventures of their own, thereby adding notably to the general confusion and inter-departmental misunderstandings.

6. The Reference Center, under ORE, found itself without adequate administrative understanding and support. The main business of ORE was to deal with critical problems of a substantive nature, and the specialists preparing an important estimate against a tight deadline naturally took precedence over library and register people whose problems could be put off till the morrow. The needs of the analysts had priority, and there was a tendency to postpone action on the more humdrum needs of the Reference Center. It seems inescapable that the same situation would develop again if the library and registers were to be reassigned to ORE, or to a Research and Reports Division created out of ORE. In addition, there is now an Office of Scientific Intelligence which requires library and register services no less than ORE, and it would be unwise to make it dependant on its sister Office for these services. I believe that the CIA Library and the registers should serve all of CIA, and that they can best do so if administered separately and apart from any one of the consumer Offices or Divisions.

7. The original Office of Collection and Dissemination had no reference functions, but concentrated on the many facets of the liaison activity. As a separate Office, it had direct access to the Director of Central Intelligence, and this would now be denied if the ICAPS (or "Coordination Division") staff were interposed. This proposal is difficult to understand, for the Committee Report places very great emphasis on the need for more forceful efforts by CIA to achieve coordination with the other agencies, and it strongly expresses the opinion that direction of CIA affairs by tour-of-duty personnel can never win to the goal. Now the small staff of ICAPS, or of the proposed "Coordination Division", consists entirely of representatives of the State and Service Departments. These men are on tour-of-duty assignments. If capable and energetic they can render great service to the United States government, to their respective Departments, and to the Central Intelligence Agency. But it is

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Page Denied

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Denied

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

impossible that they should, at one and the same time, and during relatively brief tours of duty, achieve success both (1) in handling the delicate and difficult problems of policy determination in inter-departmental relationships, and (2) in learning, understanding, and directing the myriad techniques of collection, bibliography, and dissemination. This second job is a career assignment in itself, and it is unlikely to be performed well by men who are tackling it for the first time and for a short time. This job is of so great common concern to all the Offices of the Agency that it should have direct access to the Director.

8. The Committee also proposes that the Contact Branch of OO and the Information Control Section of OSD be given a greater degree of autonomy in the dissemination of their reports. It argues that these offices have better knowledge of the consumers who need their materials than does OCD, and in this the Committee is mistaken. No one knows better who needs what material than (1) the reference people who, on direct request from the consumers, are daily compiling bibliographies and statements of available information, and (2) the liaison people whose daily chore it is to maintain close contact with consumers in all the agencies, receive their requests, and ensure that they are acted upon to the best of CIA's ability. The Committee is also mistaken in its belief that Contact Branch and OSD do not now exercise autonomy over the distribution of their own products. OCD has not in many months overruled a Contact Branch decision as to where its reports should go and from whom they should be withheld, and the Information Control Section of OSD freely distributes to other agencies reports which it denies both to ORE and to OCD. This latter activity is dangerous, is damaging to the morale of ORE analysts, and is harmful to the prestige of the Agency. Liaison Officers are frequently asked by officials of other agencies, "Why doesn't CIA coordinate itself? CIA's left hand doesn't know what its right hand is doing." The Agency is now taking steps to remedy this situation, and it is certain that the remedy involves less autonomy rather than more autonomy for the several Offices.

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